



## Bert Kelkboom makes Aruban racing history in the U.S.

Friends and family were gathered at the Queen Beatrix Airport to welcome back local hero Bert Kelkboom, best known to tourists as Bert of the Banana Bus, but also one of the island's champion drag racers. Aruba has an internationally known drag racing course in Palo Marga, where racers from the states have come to compete, and Bert has won many times. For the first time in twenty-five years, he and his teammate Andre Lowenstra have competed and won in the United States, and they received a hero's welcome for their victory.

Bert took first place in the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Toyo Tires Motorsport Nationals at the Orange Grove Raceway in Reading, Pennsylvania, part of the NMRA (National Mustang Racing Association) circuit. He won a \$5,000 purse and most likely an additional \$3,000 in contingency manufacturer prizes. This will probably just about cover his expenses for traveling to the races and transport of their new rebuilt Ford dragster, but he won the admiration and appreciation of his fellow Arubians, which he deems priceless. It was a big surprise for him as he was greeted at the airport by loved ones and the media, and his son proudly displayed his awards plaque, while Dad accepted congratulatory hugs and handshakes for a job well done.